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Stohr's "Algebra der Grammatik"

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

A paper on Stöhr's "Algebra Grammatik" was read at Union College in July, 1902, before the American Philological Association. A brief abstract of it appears in their "Proceedings." In an article which was printed in Vol II, Nos 36 and 37, of The Latin Leaflet and with modifications in Vol XXXII of the "Proceedings" of the Association, a hope was expressed that there might be developed a Comparative Science of Relations, involving an analysis, enumeration and classification of relations, in order that they might be thought of independently of words, with resulting advantage to students and expositors of grammar, more particularly of syntax. This hope appeared to some to be realized in Stöhr's "Algebra der Grammatik." For my acquaintance with the book I am indebted to Prof. Oertel, of Yale University.

Directions have often been given for translating from English into Latin that require little attention to underlying differences in the grouping and naming of things.

"By *ut* translate Infinitive"

With Ask, Command, Advise and Strive;
And never be this rule forgot:

Put *ne* for *ut* when there's a Not."

There are indeed classifications, of early origin, in which Latin and English agree, but many of these had already been forgotten by the Romans of literature. Even without trying to recall forgotten classifications, and without heeding such classifications as do not enter into the scheme of pass-examinations, one may still acquire, not merely a nursery or school Latin that he will never speak or read or write or remember, but even a humanist's Latin, and yet fail of getting the good which it is still claimed the study brings,—the power of classifying relations, of thinking.

The consciousness of the diversity of the relations among the components of the meanings of two sentences, one of which is any translation of the other,

may perhaps be quickened by a comparison between the language which the Romans used without inventing and the language which Stöhr invents without using.

Lateinisch und Stöhrisch

Latin and Stöhrish differ in so many particulars that the reason for coupling them could hardly be discerned. Latin holds its thousands of past years, and claims some part in all the future. Wherever civilization goes, Latin goes too. No other tongue escapes its influence. It is still a medium of communication, if not in state and law and business, yet in church and science. It may not soon cease to be a material for expression,—signs for one's own meaning, subject to the constraint of established significations, as if one were required to be intelligible to Republican Rome.

Stöhrish is none of these. Nor is it—but what it is alone concerns us here, and not all of that; this only: It is a way of grouping things and of naming things in accordance with the grouping. Latin is also, amid much else, a way of grouping things and of naming them in accordance with the grouping. These are the respects in which Latin and Stöhrish agree; but they differ in their way of grouping things and of naming them. It is with the description of this difference that we shall be occupied; other differences and resemblances are as numerous as they are obvious.

The Roman's name for a thing often consists of parts, each having a meaning that forms a part of the meaning of the whole. The Roman's thing for a name can commonly be analyzed into parts in many different ways; but there is one way in which name and thing correspond approximately, part to part. The thing is always found with other things; the name with other names. *Militem* breaks down into *milit* and *em* (which for that matter might be written apart); and *militem* always goes with some other word, as *ad militem* (which might be written together). *Militem* is the name, not of a soldier merely, but of a soldier in some relation, not distinctly indicated by *em*, to another something. We might say *militem* is a subject that requires a predicate; that *militem* requires *videt*. We might say that *militem* always governs some other word; that it governs *ad* in *ad militem*. We might say that it is commonly found in agreement with some other word; that it agrees with *fortem* in *fortem militem*. But "subject", "predicate", "govern", "agree" are words that direct attention to differences, even when these cease for the moment to be important; and divert attention from resemblances, even when the resemblances are precisely the aspects of the structure of the language on which the apprehension of its meaning is the more dependent. For us now the resemblances consist in this: Name requires name.

THE LATIN LEAFLET

Militem requires... what? If the Roman says *militem*, what else has he said or will he say? None can tell from *militem* alone just what he has said or will say; but we know now that *militem* forms part of the following groups and of others that resemble these in certain features: *Ad Militem*, *Militem ignavum*, *Militem videt*, *Militem irasci*.

The "aught" that *em* denotes (it does not denote naught) very vaguely, receives fuller and preciser expression in a determinate way by the use of certain names in certain positions: *Ad militem*, *Post militem*, *Militem circumstant*, *Omnes circum militem barbari clamabant*.

The thing that *milit* stands for finds a further characterization in *Militem ignavum*; precise enough perhaps for the occasion on which it was used and from which it gained a large part of its meaning, but leaving us in doubt, so far as this fragment is concerned, not only whether "a soldier" or "that soldier" or "the soldier" (generically) is meant, but whether we are to add "who is cowardly", "when he is cowardly", "if he is cowardly", "because he is cowardly", "where he is cowardly", "having been" or "being" or "to be cowardly." Not that the Roman lacked the means of expressing each of these meanings precisely; but while some supplementary name is indispensable with *ignavum militem*, others are at the speaker's option.

The other term of the relation of which *milit* expresses one term and of which *em* is one sign at least, is a part of the meaning of one or more accompanying words: *Militem viderat*, *Militem fugit*, *Militem calcavisset*, *Militem amabat*. *em* is here little more than the sign of some relation, while the relation itself may be any one of an infinity of relations, far from constant themselves and shifting with every change of knowledge or feeling. *em* is indeed in many instances a necessary sign of the relation whatever it may be, and cannot be replaced by *i* or *is* or *e*. It may survive many changes of aspect in the things related, and continue to be used when it has lost all the appropriateness which it may be imagined to have once possessed. It has not yielded always to a more suitable termination before the terminations had all disappeared, and Latin had become sufficiently unlike its former self to be called by a new name. The relations of "seer" to "seen", of "shunner" to "shunned", of "kicker" to "kicked", of "lover" to "loved", are too unlike each other and too unlike other relations that are indicated by the same form to justify spending time in trying to seize some common element, or to sort them in classes, at least until each separate relation has been somewhat exhaustively studied. Statements of grammatical facts and fancies, theories and schemes of classification, will continue to be made by those who are dissatisfied with such as have been made hitherto; but for a rule to guild practice, the grammarian can do little more than say that *militem*, or the accusative, governs the list of verbs, beginning at page *x*, and that verbs in the list on page *x* govern the accusatives, *militem* among them. So vague is the signification of *em*,—this name or part of a name, that *Militem amare* or *Militem fascinare* is ambiguous to the extent of reversing the meanings of *em* and *milit* or *fascin* and *milit*. Whether the soldier is "lover" or "loved", "fascinator" or "fascinated", cannot be learned from the above forms alone; and in fact these forms are never found alone except as

the result of some nervous or mental disorder, not always to be ascribed to undue occupation with the dissecting table of the grammarian.

But *ad* and *ignavum*, *videt* and *irasci* or the wholes,—*ad militem*, etc., of which these form parts, are merely names which require yet other names to be joined with them, and these again require others, till there are no relations in which both terms are not either fully expressed or definitely indicated.

This then is the structure of Latin: A relation is named by a separate word or a prefix or affix; but in most instances very vaguely, being left to be inferred from the related things. The names are the names of things as thus related, not of things considered apart from, or rather without indication of their relations. That complex of things and relations of which a sentence is the name has in the sentence a complex of names of things and relations, the variety of the latter corresponding in some degree to the variety of the former. Instances of Multiple Indication are numerous. In *Rivorum a fonte ductio* there is but one relation expressed by the combined influences of *a*, *e*, *di*, and the implications of *riv*, *font*, and *duc*. Not that many other relations are not brought out with more or less distinctness in this phrase; but this one aspect of "stream" and "source", this relation of "from", however abundantly indicated, is directly expressed by each of its indications, and not by the indirect method which we shall see in Stöhrish. The Latin names for the relations, even when they form parts of words, are various, distinct, independent, as the names for the related things themselves. A Latin sentence is a name for a set of interrelated phenomena. Among these phenomena, the speaker or the feelings of the speaker, are usually included. There is often some indication of the particular thing of the whole set to which the hearer's attention is to be directed. Things had been grouped in a certain way, and this grouping had been reflected in the parts of a sentence. What could not be grouped in that way, a Roman could not say; but what he wanted to say would commonly be so associated with what he could say, that the former might be inferred from the latter.

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